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10 March 1954

INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE 8753

Soviet Capabilities in Guided Missiles

1. The Administrator of the Federal Civil Defense Administration has submitted to the Director of Central Intelligence the attached letter requesting estimates on Soviet capabilities in the field of guided missiles.

2. At present, there is no National Intelligence Estimate extant which presents detailed estimates of Soviet capabilities and intentions to develop short-range or long-range missiles.

3. It is believed that the resources of the entire intelligence community are required to adequately treat this problem. A realistic intelligence estimate of Soviet capabilities and probable courses of action in this field requires detailed consideration of the basic scientific advances which must be made, the related problems of applied engineering and technology, the impact on the economy, operational capabilities, and underlying military doctrines and philosophy.

4. Although there is little direct information available on this subject, it is believed that a reasonably reliable national estimate can be derived with the help of a detailed review of all of the evidence at hand by intelligence officers (working together with a small group of key U.S. authorities knowledgeable on all aspects of a guided missiles program) against a theoretical frame of reference consisting of the scientific, technical, and economic accomplishments required to develop and produce guided missiles which constitute a threat against U.S. interests.

5. Therefore, it is requested that the IAC approve undertaking a National Intelligence Estimate on the status of the Soviet guided missiles program through 1960 — this estimate to be completed during the third quarter of 1954.

6. This matter will be considered at the IAC meeting of 16 March 1954.

RICHARD D. DRAIN
Secretary

IAC-D-81
10 March 1954

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29 January 1954

Honorable Allen W. Dulles
Director
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Dulles:

Federal Civil Defense Administration must base its plans for the civil defense of this country on the best and latest intelligence. The estimates of Soviet capabilities produced by your Agency, as well as pertinent National Security Council documents, are the best basis for such planning.

For the present, and for some years to come, we believe that the principal threat to the continental United States is that of nuclear weapons delivered by manned aircraft. Under present conditions of warning, we can advocate only a "duck and cover" doctrine for people, utilizing the shelter provided by existing buildings and some dispersal of equipment. We are, however, approaching the time when the progress of presently planned warning systems will give us a reasonable chance of receiving enough advance warning to make it practicable to plan for a dispersal of the populations of our principal cities. As the warning system increases in effectiveness our civil defense plans will be modified to meet the new developments.

At some time in the not too distant future this situation may change radically. When the Soviet Union succeeds in developing a true inter-continental ballistic missile of reasonable accuracy and capable of carrying an atomic warhead, all defense plans based on the detection and warning system would have to be re-evaluated. If no effective warning can be expected, the civil defense problem cannot be met by relying on emergency dispersal of people, and must be re-examined from the ground up.

For this reason it would be extremely helpful to us to know the potentialities of the Soviet long-range guided missile programs as far in advance as possible. There are available to us various brief statements on the subject, ranging from the NIS series to Section 25 of

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SE 36/1, but these do not meet our requirements, either as to detail or projection into the future. I am, therefore, requesting you to furnish us an estimate of Soviet capabilities in the field of long-range guided missiles, giving your opinion on probable range and weight of the weapon and its accuracy of aim with at least a minimum date at which we can expect them to exist in operational numbers. While our main interest is in these long-range weapons, we would also like to have your latest estimate of Soviet progress in the shorter range missiles suitable for launching from submarines or surface ships, as well as developments in air-to-ground types.

I would naturally like to have these estimates as soon as possible. However, it is more important to have a complete round-up and a thorough evaluation of all the available information in a few months than to have a hurried job in a matter of weeks. I do not wish to appear to set a deadline on this request, but we would like to have the study by the middle of May, if you think it reasonable. The paper will be used only in our Washington office, and it is not to be given to State or local authorities, so that a high security classification will not be an inconvenience.

Sincerely,

s/ Val Petersen

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